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ABSTRACT

This paper examines attempts at four prototypical undergraduate liberal arts colleges to build community based on liberal educational principles and values, and investigates liberal education's ability to meet the challenges of multiculturalism. Data for the study was derived from a content analysis of archival materials from the four colleges, including mission statements, college catalogues, admissions viewbooks and videos, capital campaign videos, admissions CD-ROMS, and institution Web sites. Data were prepared for qualitative analysis through a process of scanning and conversion to HyperRESEARCH formats, creating categories and codes that reflected Deweyan multiculturalism. Six major themes emerged from the content analysis: representation and cultural pluralism; communication; others' experience as subject matter; students' engagement with or interest in subject matter; and learning relationships. The study found that all four institutions publicly adhere, in varying degrees, to traditional definitions of liberal learning; all remain fundamentally tied to liberal ideas about community and difference and generally understand multiculturalism as primarily enumerative, developmental for students, and peripheral to the liberal curriculum and the institutional mission. Effective communication of difference was inadequate at three of the four institutions. (Contains 15 references.) (SM)

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Multiculturalism and the Mission of Liberal Education

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Abstract

Multiculturalism and the Mission of Liberal Education

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Rooted in liberal culture and largely unchanged since the establishment of the colonial colleges, the communitarian ideal of today's colleges appears at odds with the post-modern demands of multiculturalism. Applying content analysis methodology, this paper presents an examination of four undergraduate liberal arts colleges' attempts to build community based on liberal educational principles and values.

Introduction

In many ways, the last 20 years in American higher education have proven to be ground zero for issues of diversity. New knowledge claims, the debate over free speech and community standards of civility, and the politics of group rights versus individual rights exploded on college and university campuses challenging faculty, students and administrators to examine the means and aims of higher learning.

Believed to engender a spirit of community, liberal education was placed center stage in these times of charged dissension on campuses, its proponents having faith in its ability to foster a mutual intelligibility judged indispensable in a growing pluralism. Treatises like philosopher Martha Nussbaum's Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education (1997) or projects like the Association of American College and Universities' "American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy and Liberal Learning" (1992), invoked a rhetoric that assumed the compatibility of liberal education with multiculturalism. Further, its supporters allege that liberal learning will engender a spirit of community.

In 1990, emblematic of the anxiety about the diversification of the American collegiate experience, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published the results of a yearlong study designed to reassert the ideal of community in higher education. Charged by college and university presidents to determine the ways in which a "renewal of community in higher learning" could be enacted given the "loss of community" (Boyer, 1993, p. 324), a loss mainly attributed to an increasingly diverse student body and professoriat and the era's curricular challenges, the Carnegie Foundation in its report proposed a set of communitarian principles that could "provide a

model for the nation " (p. 328). The aim of these principles was to revitalize the ideal of community on post secondary campuses, an ideal presumed possible through the liberal mission of American higher education.

These principles of community, however, were not derived from a deconstruction of what is meant by "community," hence no mindful critique of the communitarian aim of the American undergraduate enterprise was undertaken. The Carnegie principles were the product of a Liberal definition of collegiate community and like other accounts of the ideal of community in American higher education did not verify that the post-modern goals of multiculturalism (a consequence of increased racial and ethnic diversity and the post-modern challenges to the curriculum) and the goals of community (a shared desire for a universal understanding of civility via liberal education) could be compatible.

The Carnegie principles, like most of the scholarship and commentary on the need to rekindle community on campus, attempted to address the racial and intellectual tensions that characterized the college and university campus of the past 30 years by reasserting the worthiness of liberal education. Some would judge that the reassertion has failed given the persistence of these tensions, leading us to ask if liberal education and its consequent ways of thinking and knowing can truly engender community on the American college campus. Specifically, can the institutional agent of liberal thinking and learning, the Liberal Arts College, give rise to effective communitarian sensibilities?[1]

To answer these questions, our first task is to do what the Carnegie project did not do; that is, to ascertain whether liberal education can be an effective means to community on campus. We must verify that liberal education and multiculturalism are compatible; that liberal educational principles can bring about an effectual pluralistic community. To

do so, it is important to 'read' liberal education through a critical lens. This particular examination of will be guided by John Dewey's pragmatic construction of culture, communication, and sociality.

Liberal Education and the American College

Inherited from Europe, liberal education in the American college can claim an aristocratic constitution. The hallmark of the free citizen, liberal education ennobled a young man's intellect rendering him eligible for America's maturing participatory democracy. By disciplining the mind and reinforcing Protestant morality, liberal education granted young men of the new republic a socio-cultural credential rooted not in populist sentiments but in elitist apprehensions about democracy. Liberal study inculcated a view that placed supreme value on autonomy, individuality, and rational self-control, all deemed necessary attributes for democratic community, yet simultaneously harboring a pessimistic conviction about the intelligence of the underclasses (Hollinger, 1996). The values and habits of mind to be acquired by young men through liberal education "were thought to be values to which only a small minority could successfully aspire" (Hollinger, 1996, xiii). Aristocratic in nature, liberal education in the American college instilled in students a privileging of one kind of knowledge over all others.

The mission of the American college supposed liberal ideals and a commitment to the free pursuit of truth guided by *a priori* principles. Knowledge in liberal education was understood to be the consequence of reflection organized by absolute principles. Context-neutral and coherent, liberal education would train young men in the habits of inquiry that would enable him to judge rationally and to self-govern. Liberal education

would author America's "gentleman": a fully realized, autonomous individual ruled by reason. His passions deemed irrational and loyalties and distinctions neutralized by rationality, liberal education's "gentleman" is temperate and a-historic. His reasoned inquiry will deem the value of ends by the rigor of his reason; thus the end's worth is solely the outcome of reason and logic and not of the exigency of attendant conditions.

Theoretical Frame: Dewey's Community, Dewey's Multiculturalism

According to Dewey, groups of individuals become communities as a consequence of several factors. First, Dewey placed the conditions for the development of community squarely on his belief that individuals are by nature social, relational, and members of many groups; that social life and communication are indistinguishable, and that collective behavior did not in and of itself constitute communality (Dewey, 1944; 1946). In The Public and its Problems (1946) Dewey reasoned that community could not be realized if we did not recognize that an individual is a member of many groups and that her growth corresponds to the degree to which she is unrestricted in her participation within and across these groups and those groups yet to be encountered. Dewey's criteria for an individual's growth, the degree to which experiences are "numerous and varied" and the extent to which those experiences are "full and free" (Dewey, 1944, p. 83) is the same for a collection of individuals, groups. Groups must "interact flexibly and fully in connection with other groups" (p.147) in order for individual members to grow. Additionally, hindering an individual's participation in multiple groups restricts the growth of all members. In Dewey's view, effective communities are democratically participatory and are fueled by the understanding that "the progress of one member has worth for the experience of other members" (p.83). Thus groups that did not distort

learning nor inhibit communication between members within and external to itself would be communal. To frustrate or obstruct the growth of individuals in a group or association would mean to lose the potential educative value of the "many interests consciously communicated and shared" by individuals (p.83), a criterion for Deweyan community. A departure from liberalism's autonomous and self-reliant individual, Dewey's individual regards community as a necessary condition of her intellectual growth. Reliant on the exchange of information and communication of meaning with a diverse range of other individuals, she cannot fully realize without that sociality. Schools, civic groups, political organizations, or ethnic associations risk narrowing the intellectual scope of its members if these individuals cannot balance their "intellectual stimulation" through contact with other groups (Dewey, 1944, p.85). When groups or communities arrest the participation of members or their communication, "the experience of each party loses meaning" thereby educating "some into masters" and "others into slaves" (p.84). The lack of intellectual challenge, or in Dewey's language "balance," restricts intelligence further narrowing experience. To prohibit or preclude "novelty" is antithetical to intellectual development. Our group or communal identifications and memberships should enable us to engage in "continuous readjustment as a consequence of meeting new situations produced by varied intercourse"(pp. 86-87). In other words, Dewey understands that communities are educative only if they encourage, support, and provide *the means* for a deliberate communication of both shared interests and the challenges to those interests.

It is this communication that "insures participation in common understanding" and that will produce community according to Dewey (Dewey, 1944, p. 4). Individuals

come to shared purposes not simply by their physical proximity, Dewey warned, but because they each understand and have participated in the development of a common aim and have actively participated in its means. In order to do so, individuals would "have to know what the other was about and would have to have some way of keeping the other informed as to his purpose and progress" (p.5). In other words, individuals cannot create community without effectively sharing and communicating their disparate experiences and taking equal and democratic part in the objectives of the group.

Democratic conditions are those under which Dewey believed that individuals could effectively communicate and consequently develop community. Democratic sociality absent "mushy sentimentalism" (Dewey, 1946, p.149) becomes the pragmatic means to attain community, a means that requires the distinctive contributions of all members. On a pluralistic campus, this must necessarily include a commitment to perspectives organized around the experiential differences across race, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, and nationality. These differences won't undermine community, according to Dewey. Rather, it is differences uncommunicated or exercised to create barriers that will limit individuals' free and full communication and prohibit democratic community (Dewey, 1976b). The "hyphenism" of Americans is such a difference. Racial, ethnic or national difference is a peculiarity that when understood as a way of accounting for the "special good" of ethnic or racial groups, or as a way for communicating varied experiences can broaden intelligence (pp. 205-206). Recognizing that ethnic or racial identifications can signal opportunities for widening our understanding of reality is a necessary condition for communality.

It is in this recognition that groups can find an effective means to developing shared purposes, to realizing community. Let's remember that it is difference, or the "[d]iversity of stimulation" or "novelty" that challenges us beyond the limits of our own experiences, of our own intelligences according to Dewey (Dewey, 1944, p.85). Difference effectively communicated will not isolate groups and their members. Instead, difference effectively communicated provides the conditions for the full, free, and deliberative interactions so vital to an individual's intellectual growth. It is the communication of our socio-cultural differences, then, that can modify and complicate our knowledge and can thus improve our chances for communality. Because such communication provides opportunities for learning, and because it broadens intelligence, Dewey would view this communication as functionally critical and reflective. These are the environmental factors constitutive of deliberative thinking. Welcoming the chance to interact with unfamiliar or different ideas edifies our thinking and gives us the means to share interests and engage in common pursuits.

The communication of our socio-cultural identities is what we will term "Deweyan multiculturalism." A communication of needs, values, and epistemologies, Deweyan multiculturalism is meaningfully communicated difference that is effectively understood. How the communication is achieved and how it expands thinking in the college environment will undoubtedly be dependent on the primary medium of learning, the curriculum and its pedagogy. Critically reflective of socio-cultural facts, the college curriculum and pedagogy, if they are to nurture the effective communication necessary for community, must do several things. First, it must enable students to develop mutually intelligible signifiers not through mere association but through the presentation of

analogous and/or relevant experiences (via texts, laboratory work, films, internships, foreign exchange, etc.) that prompt communication. The relativism of personal experience cannot dictate learning, but rather a dialogue that "draws out the ideas of students," and that "exposes myths and stereotypes to critical scrutiny"(Gaff, 1992, p.32) must be a pedagogical imperative. Students can then organize what has become familiar through inquiry and discriminating analyses, hence expanding their intelligence.

Through a curriculum and pedagogy that foster effective communication across individuals and in which each person can critically scrutinize subject matter or what constitutes "truth," students can begin to stipulate ends and to discuss the objectives of their intellectual community, their college. Brought into the dialogue by their desire to broaden and deepen their own knowledge and those of others, and welcomed by other individuals who share the same purpose for themselves, students and faculty become active participants in the development of shared ends.

The Rhetoric of Community: A Qualitative Study of Liberal Arts Colleges

Below we discuss the initial research phase of an extensive project designed to assess the appropriateness of liberal education for the development of multicultural community on college campuses. As with Patton's (1990) "orientational qualitative inquiry," ideology will determine the variables, concepts, and interpretations in the analysis. The theoretical foundation grounded in Deweyan perspectives outlined above (Martínez Alemán, in press) guided the inquiry. Thus, using Deweyan terminology we set out to understand and describe how four liberal arts colleges articulate liberal education's ability to engender multicultural community in their public documents".

Discussion of the Study

In order to examine liberal education's ability to meet the challenges of multiculturalism and enact community in higher education, we chose to examine undergraduate liberal arts colleges as they epitomize the ideals of liberal learning and desire for community. In selecting these institutions geographic location, co-educational status, minority student enrollment, and institutional size were all considered. Most importantly, the four selected institutions all explicitly stated a value of, adherence to and appreciation for liberal education. All four institutions are categorized under the Carnegie classification system (Carnegie Foundation, 1994) as Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) Colleges I. All four are recognized as liberal arts colleges by national college ranking and profiling reference texts such as U. S. News and World Report, Peterson's Four Year Colleges, and Barron's Profiles of American Colleges and apply selective admission criteria. In sum, these four institutions were deemed representative examples of post secondary liberal education. For the purposes of confidentiality, pseudonyms are used to refer to these four colleges. The four colleges studied will be referred to as: Pioneer College, Berry College, Hirst College, and Rugger College.

We chose to study these institutions first through a content analysis of archival materials. By utilizing public documents were we able to explore questions of liberal education, multiculturalism and community in an unobtrusive, thorough manner which established "a passport to listening to the words of the text, and understanding better the perspective of the producers of these words" (Berg, 1998, p.225). The language used in the documents communicated information and was recognized as "a device with which to signal and negotiate [the institution's] social identity" (Gee, 1990, p.78) as it pertains to liberal education and multicultural community. Various publications and multi-media

material produced by each institution were gathered to explore the colleges' recognition and integration of the ideals of multiculturalism into their vision and articulation of the liberal learning and community experience at their institution. Each of the materials selected served to represent the college to its faculty, staff, students, and administration as well as to the outside world.

The starting point for all four institutions was to gather the mission statement, the articulation of the college's vision and self-understanding. Because they provide information on the academic offerings and expectations and the college experience as a whole, as well as serving as a collegiate contract, the college catalogues were selected as an important document to explore. The general admissions viewbooks were chosen for analysis as they represent the college, its mission, and its self-understanding to prospective students and others both inside and outside of the institution. Similarly admission videos, capital campaign videos, and admissions CD-ROM were assembled from each institution to gain a multi-media, and often personal perspective of the institution as understood and projected by these public serving offices. Finally, the web sites from each were chosen for examination because each presents additional information on the institution, as well as day-to-day happenings on campus. All of these materials were made ready for qualitative analysis through a process of scanning and conversion to HyperRESEARCH formats. Pertinent segments of the videos were converted from VHS to quick-time format so that the material was computer readable and able to be coded on a frame-by-frame basis.

Method

The first step of the analytical process was to take our understanding of Deweyan multiculturalism and translate it into identifiable codes. The codes were derived from the fundamental principles that we understand to comprise "Deweyan multiculturalism," a paradigm developed by (Martínez Alemán, 2000). The tenets that established the codes were:

- Education must be mutually beneficial for dissimilar persons
- Education that is dependent on dissimilar other(s) is necessary for learning about self or for self-realization
- Students' intellectual and developmental growth is dependent on the growth others
- The college must foster effective communication between dissimilar persons
- The college does not restrain communication between students
- The college does not restrain communication between students and between students and faculty
- Effective communication occurs and is dependent on the curriculum
- The college provides students with the opportunity to think critically about the experiential data supplied by others in or outside the curriculum
- Students engage in critical scrutiny of the curriculum
- Students' individual interests are positively acknowledged within the curriculum
- Students' individual interests are positively engaged within the curriculum
- Curricular breadth extends beyond the traditional subject matter
- Co-curricular breadth incorporates unfamiliar or unknown experiences
- The educational culture values and supports students' cultural identities

Categories and codes were created which reflected Deweyan multiculturalism, and these theoretical underpinnings were held up to the modern liberal arts college materials through a deductive coding approach (Berg, 1998). Additionally, an inductive approach was taken with three additional codes that emerged when the documents were initially reviewed. These codes were

- The college supports faculty scholarship of non-traditional (multicultural) subjects
- The educational experience extends to experiential learning in multicultural environments
- The college claims enumerative diversity

All the codes were then laid out in a code map that illustrated the connection of the individual codes to larger themes of consciousness, curriculum and co-curriculum. These fourteen codes were created to serve as analytical tools and the mapping process helped suggest relationships between codes in the analysis.

Each document, web site and video was entered as a source into the qualitative research package HyperRESEARCH. All the sources were coded using our Deweyan multiculturalism coding schema. Through this framework, the materials were reviewed on a line by line and a broader overview basis to highlight the presence or absence of multiculturalism in the institution's self-understanding and vision of liberal arts and community. Both the manifest and the latent content were explored to uncover the frequency of appearance, surface level meaning, and underlying significance of the materials (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

The units of analysis used included phrases, sentences, paragraphs, concepts, images, and frames. In some instances more than one code was applied to a single passage or quote. In other situations a single code was applied to an entire section or series of paragraphs that expressed one of the multicultural tenets. Each researcher coded independently of the other and then came together to assess coherence and to eliminate irrelevant items. Additionally, as material was coded, many of the codes were annotated with questions, thoughts or other memoing information that allowed the coding rationale to be more explicit and accessible. Through this coding and annotating method we were able to follow three important guidelines of content analysis, (1) to scrutinize the data with a consistent series of questions and codes, (2) to analyze the data at a varied level of analysis, and (3) to maintain theoretical notes and records essential in ongoing and future data analysis (Strauss, 1987). Once all the materials for a single institution were coded, a report was generated to summarize the prevalence, and absence of certain ideas across sources and for the institution. These reports provided as basic information as a simple numeric count of the codes and as complex information as the source context and coding annotations to provide a rich picture of the material examined and coding decisions. From these reports, major themes from the individual institution were examined.

Findings

Six major themes emerged from the content analysis of institutional documents: (a) representation and cultural pluralism; (b) communication; (c) others' experience as subject matter; (d) students' engagement with or interest in subject matter; and (e) learning relationships. Each of these themes could additionally be differentiated into sub-themes.

Representation and Cultural Pluralism

Expressions of representation and cultural pluralism found in the documents were most often (a) 'throw away' statements that included the word "diversity" as a catch phrase or loose characterization of the college or college activity; (b) references to students (we found only one reference to diverse faculty, none about administrators[iii]); (c) multiculturalism as an add-on to the liberal mission of the college; and (d) the discourse of diversity as educationally relevant.

The word "diversity" is most frequently used in ways that resemble or suggest advertising copy. College viewbooks and admissions materials invoke the term with little to no explanation of what is meant by "diversity", in what ways the college does or doesn't value it, and what educative impact it may or may not have. It is used as an eye-catching, almost slogan-like appeal to the consumer. Much like advertisers may pitch a product by highlighting its most timely marketable trait (e. g. "lite", "non-fat"), these colleges used "diversity" as a means to attract the consumer to what they perceive is a desirable educational condition: the presence of racial and ethnic minority students.

A similar thread continues when one looks at the ways in which cultural pluralism is portrayed as fundamentally a condition of the extra-curriculum and residential life. Here we find that the colleges talk about multiculturalism as a means to a communal spirit within the dorms and in student activities. The discussion of diversity in the extra-curriculum, however, does not delineate just how cultural, ethnic or racial difference will create community among students outside the classroom. The reader must believe that "diversity equals community". The lack of explanation of the process suggests that such a cause-and-effect equation is either apparent or unsubstantiated. The absence of such an

explanation in the many documents analyzed suggests to us that these particular colleges either (a) don't really know whether the cause or the effect are credible variables in the equation and/or (b) take the assumption as *prima facie*. Put another way, it's easy to believe that these colleges promote the virtues of multiculturalism and community yet have no idea whether one can truly achieve the other.

When used in a discussion of a college mission, multiculturalism or cultural pluralism was invoked as a spirit able to be embraced by the liberal educational mission of the college. Most often, the rhetoric of "diversity" was grafted onto the liberal mission, almost establishing a hyphenated state of being. In this language, it appears that these colleges believe that cultural pluralism or multiculturalism can be affixed onto liberal education so that each co-exists, attached by a metaphoric hyphen. It is clear, however, that in this hyphenation of liberal education and multiculturalism it is the latter that is enjoined to the former; that it is liberal education that accepts the "new" or "foreign" element and yet remains fundamentally unchanged. The liberal arts college "accepts" concatenation with multiculturalism but assumes no essential or elemental change. The inference here is that liberal education is capable of effectively meeting the intellectual and social challenges of multiculturalism without any paradigmatic change. Each college mission, undeniably liberal, demonstrates a belief in the applicability of liberal learning to multicultural demands.

Though the dominant thesis regarding multicultural representation in the colleges is that liberal education is inherently well suited for such pluralistic discourse and critical analyses, there were instances in which a college did acknowledge that some change to the college would take place. For example, at Pioneer College it is assumed that racially

and ethnically diverse students will change the college, a daunting proposition if ever there was one. Here, the multicultural student takes on the overwhelming task of changing the intellectual composition of the college and the social comportment of its members, a responsibility that converts student to teacher, student to educator.

> I think minority students are comfortable here. Even those that have their problems with [Pioneer] love their institution. And that makes the difference. They believe that [Pioneer] has the capacity to change and that they can play a constructive part in reworking the system. (Pioneer College Viewbook)

The educational relevance of cultural pluralism on these four campuses is most often framed as an extra-curricular student experience and yet we found many instances when the colleges touted the educational or cognitive value of diversity. In these instances, the colleges present diversity as educative. But as in the case of its mention as the cause for community among students, there is no discussion of how the colleges act upon this assertion. For example, in a Pioneer College publication we read

> Diversity is fundamental to our mission. Over many decades, we have reached out to include talented people of different races, ethnicities, nationalities, faiths, and socioeconomic backgrounds. (Pioneer College Catalogue)

with no further discussion of how or why diversity is fundamental to its mission. And in the Hirst College Viewbook we also find

> The quality of a student's education can be strongly affected by other students. In addition to selecting students with strong

> intellectual ability, the admissions committee strives to bring together an interesting, diverse group of students whose backgrounds, experiences, values, talents, and aspirations will contribute to creating a stimulating, diverse student community.

Additionally, the four colleges studied do not discuss how cultural pluralism is educative, nor do they articulate what makes it a valued way of learning. We came across no examples of how this principle is put into practice. Even though these colleges purport that multiculturalism supplements or enhances learning, "because teaching and learning at their best are conversations with people other than ourselves about ideas and experiences other than our own"(Pioneer College Viewbook), there are no deliberate attempts in these publications to explain such a phenomenon.

Communication

Our analysis of the content of institutional documents revealed a rich rhetorical landscape. In their literature, these four colleges present a view of communicative enterprises that suggests (a) that communication between students and faculty are very highly valued; (b) that student-student communication is not as valued as or are valued differently from student-faculty communication; (c) that pedagogy and the heightened value of student self-reliance restrain communication; and (d) that the curriculum is not understood as having a communicative character.

These four liberal arts colleges strongly believe in the value of faculty-student communication. Such a value, or in the case of Pioneer College, "the master principle" (Viewbook), makes sense given the Idealist tradition of liberal education, a tradition in which faculty model intellectual behavior and moral reasoning.

> Professors, knowing students over years, measure their growth. Students, knowing professors intimately, detect any conflict between what a teacher professes and his or her behavior. (Hirst College Mission Statement)

These four colleges almost overemphasize the importance and worth of faculty's communication with students and though there were instances when this communication was characterized as a partnership, it is mostly one-directional. Students learn from communicating with faculty, rarely do faculty learn from students. The communication between student and faculty was often described as Socratic in nature, with faculty asking leading questions to stimulate the learner. This type of communication reinforces the idea that the intellectual processes of faculty are to be imitated, that students should learn to investigate like their teachers. Such communication appears to lack aspects Dewey found necessary for effective communication: mutuality and meaningfulness.

Yet we did find that in the case of Rugger College the senior thesis requirement that is so central to the intellectual identity of the college does require the type of communicative relationship between student and faculty that Dewey has suggested. The highly individualized enterprise of a senior thesis requires a communication between the student and the faculty that Dewey would judge educative.

> In conferences ideas, facts, methods of analysis, and interpretations are exchanged, challenged, and defended by both students and faculty, who jointly share responsibility for the learning process. (Rugger Catalogue)

> You belong here if you want to talk with your teachers, not merely listen to them. (Rugger Viewbook)

Here we noted that students see their senior thesis (a meaningful intellectual enterprise) and their discussion with faculty as reciprocative (mutuality). Here, students are agents in a conversational partnership, not passive beneficiaries.

Each institution emphasizes faculty-student communication and as such we could not assert that institutional policies constrained this communication. However, even if it is integral to a liberal education to have close contact with faculty, to engage faculty in students' individual intellectual journeys, we were unable to judge the effectiveness of this communication. For example, do all students feel equally free to engage faculty one-on-one? Could racial or gender differences restrain communication between faculty and student? If faculty are predominantly white, as they are in these cases, and if ten to fifteen percent of the students are not, could we believe that the communication between these two groups are free of socio-cultural constraints? The colleges' literature would have us believe that all students effectively communicate with all faculty. Somehow, faculty in these liberal arts colleges manage to transcend the impact of racial, ethnic and gender socialization. What's implied is that these faculty, as the standard bearers of liberal education, are intellects able to reason objectively without the taint of culture. Thus, despite the fact that we found no institutional policy or sanctioned practice employed to prevent communication between faculty and student, the content analysis did not yield information on the effectiveness of these communications. It seems that faculty communication with students is beneficial for students, no matter who the faculty are or are not.

What is written about student-student communication is in many ways very much unlike that of the communication between faculty and students. These four colleges assume student-student communication occurs only in or primarily outside of the classroom in residential units and common spaces. The analysis yielded a view of student-student communication that suggests that it is outside the classroom where students engage each other, challenge each other's views, and take some intellectual risks. This was especially true at Pioneer College where students are expected to question their peers' presumptions, and to challenge opinions.

> Of course, our students learn much from one another, too, and classroom discussions frequently spill over to college walkways and dorms. The spark may come from a shared enthusiasm or, just as likely, from a difference of opinion. With students who represent a spectrum of backgrounds, temperaments, convictions and tastes, the college has a lively and dynamic intellectual atmosphere. Within a framework of mutual respect and, often, of warm friendship, students question one another's ideas and assumptions. (Pioneer College Viewbook)

This type of communication does not necessarily occur in the classroom, however. Though seminars and small classes are part of the pedagogical experience for students at these four colleges, we did not find that student-student interactions were highly valued in these contexts. Classroom discourse placed faculty-student communication front and center. We found few instances when students challenged

peers in a classroom setting or engaged each other in a mutually meaningful exchange. For example, at Berry College a student reflects on a common student experience

> Everybody doesn't have the same opinion...and you say your opinion and you think, "You know what? So-and-so definitely isn't going to agree with me but I am going to say it anyway." (Berry College Video)

We did not find instances of student-centered pedagogy that would require or demand student-student exchanges that were educative. Descriptions and video footage of classroom interactions in these four colleges suggested that a Socratic pedagogy remains the status quo. Faculty question and comment, students listen and respond to the faculty.

All four colleges portrayed the racial and ethnic diversity of students as an important characteristic of the extra-curriculum largely because each institution viewed this as necessary for educative communication. What is interesting here is that these colleges relegated this communication largely to the extra-curriculum and not the curriculum and other academic activities. For example, we did not read about students' diversity impacting the educative character of classroom exchanges, whether between students and peers or students and faculty. Even more telling is the fact that these colleges do not assume that diverse students will educate or inform faculty in any intellectually valuable way. Student diversity seems to only impact student life outside the classroom and does not impact their relationships with faculty or with the subject matter. Student diversity is to challenge student opinions and perspectives; it is not meant to challenge the knowledge base of the college, the liberal arts curriculum. Further still, the lack of the diversity of faculty implies that the curriculum and the

communication between faculty and students will lack the critical character that these colleges understand diversity to bring among students. It seems, then, that multiculturalism is primarily a student affair, not an academic or faculty matter.

Most revealing are the results of the content analysis on the communicative character of the curriculum. The curriculum is rarely described or characterized as the means to effective communication between faculty and students and between students and students. The subject matter of courses, majors, or senior theses is depicted as concrete and stable, suggesting that it is not subject to change the consequence of communicative action, and in this case, communication brought on by multiculturalism. Texts, laboratories, and projects, though meaningful in the sense that they must be acted upon by students, are portrayed as components of a curriculum of "enduring ideas" (Hirst College Viewbook) and examples of "humanistic foundations of our own contemporary cultures" (Rugger College Viewbook). Dewey would judge the subject matter of such a college curriculum as stagnant and not fully susceptible to change. As Dewey noted, the worth of a curriculum "is the extent to which [it] is animated by a social spirit" (Dewey, 1944, p. 358). In the case of these four colleges, our content analysis revealed that though curricula did reflect disciplinary growth spurred on by the critical intellectual forces of the last thirty years, the curriculum was not perceived by the institutions to be the target of multicultural change. The "social spirit" we are calling multiculturalism is not depicted as a defining characteristic of the intellectual core or fundamental nature of these colleges. Multiculturalism appears to be something students possess and primarily utilize in their relationships with peers.

Others' Experience as Subject Matter

The value of experiential diversity for each of the colleges appears to remain concentrated in the extra-curriculum. Each college spent considerably amount of time outlining international study programs and fieldwork, campus events such as Black History Month and ethnic festivals. Colleges seemed to take great pains to list ethnic and racial organization, some also giving publicity to Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual student groups and activities. However, the growth of interdisciplinary courses and programs and faculty development measures do suggest that the colleges' curricula have been impacted by multicultural demands.

Each of these colleges incorporate interdisciplinary programs of majors, minors, or concentrations that are arguably the consequence of multicultural forces impacting knowledge bases. However, the content analysis was designed to assess the extent to which institutions supported faculty work in these "non-traditional" intellectual areas. What the analysis revealed is that these colleges do a lot of listing of these "non-traditional" intellectual areas in faculty profiles and publications but rarely in discussions of curricula or academic programs. Multicultural subjects were most often framed as faculty accomplishments oddly separated from the central academic mission of the college. We found no substantive discussion of the place of these faculty interests in the intellectual development of students or their relevance to the educational mission of the institution. The colleges were more likely to discuss the merits of liberal education in depth than to articulate their understanding of the place of multiculturalism in the life of the mind, the intellectual heart of the college.

Students' Engagement with and Interest in the Subject Matter

The publications of these four colleges reveal that liberal education is considered by each college to be the tool for intellectual inquiry regardless of the interests of the students. All the colleges consider liberal education capable of meeting any intellectual interests of the students. These interests are most often characterized as individual and not as interests derived from group identity or enculturation. At Pioneer College students travel their "own distinct intellectual paths" (Catalogue) and at Rugger College students' highly individualized course of study is ferried by liberal education. It is the individual mind that is esteemed in this educational Neo-Idealism. Consequently, liberal education is portrayed as able to satisfy student interest because it engages students in an intellectual journey believed to assure "self-realization". But this is a rendering of "self-realization" that is restricted by its liberal definition. This "self" and its journey to awareness is defined not by the context of its multiple identities but by "unprejudiced inquiry" (Berry College Catalogue) uninformed by the experiential differences and pluralistic epistemology assured by multiculturalism. The irony here is that "self" and "interest" are much the same thing, or as Dewey would say, "two names for the same fact" (1944, p. 352). The fact, here, is that students are identities with intellectual interests informed and shaped by their socio-cultural conditions. If the mission of liberal education is to engage students in the pursuit of knowledge for the purpose of self-realization, then it must take these facts of identity into intellectual account. Without this, only those students experientially consonant with the epistemology of liberal coursework will arrive at self-understanding.

Learning Relationships

Three of the four institutions address the importance of learning relationships in liberal education. Pioneer, Berry and Hirst present a valuing of learning relationships which assumes (a) learning from dissimilar others is necessary in order to understand others' points of view, (b) education is made beneficial by the presence of dissimilar others, and (c) a student's intellectual growth is fostered through learning about others. Rugger College failed to acknowledge the relevance or even the existence of student to student learning in their liberal arts experience. For Pioneer, Berry and Hirst, interaction of students with dissimilar students provides essential opportunities for learning and growth. This interaction enables students to recognize difference, engage in dialogue across and perhaps about this difference and begin to understand how this difference contributes to others' points of view. Encountering difference is valued as a facet of the liberal arts college experience. The Hirst College President expresses this belief by stating,

> Along with the contemplation of great ideas, the study of great works in various fields of endeavor, and the development of crucial analytical and communication skills, I believe that an essential part of a true liberal-arts education is experience of difference. (Hirst College Presidential Speech, Web Site)

While the experience of difference is given attention, it is recognized along with but not elemental in "great ideas," "great works," and the development of analytical and communication skills. This qualification, found in the publications of all of the colleges, places the experience of difference outside of traditional liberal education, and de-

emphasizes its existence and influence in the curriculum and in the classroom. Such a relegation of the experience of difference demonstrates the institutions' doubts about the essential nature of difference and its integration into or even compatibility with the values of liberal education.

In their residence halls, walkways and extra-curricular encounters, students are able to explore "the experience of difference." This exploration forces students to take risks in their interactions with other students, risks that might lead to new knowledge and new experiences. One Pioneer student describes this opportunity stating, "I've found that the greatest growing I've done is when I've risked myself-when I've stepped out of what was comfortable to reach other people" (Pioneer Viewbook). Students provide the means and opportunity for their peers to explore new points of view and ways of thinking. While these encounters with difference can lead to new knowledge and new perspectives, it does not seem essential that these intellectual journeys encompass self-examination and self-realization. Nowhere in the publications is this self-exploration discussed or highlighted as a benefit or a consequence of the experience of difference. Self-realization is not described through the context of dissimilar others. Difference is described as a tool of learning but not as a means to facilitate self-reflection. Self-realization occurs not through interactions with other students, but as a consequence of academic thinking and learning in a curricular arena inattentive to the experience of difference.

In the extra-curriculum, dissimilarity becomes the vehicle to learning, and this learning seems to benefit all involved in the dialogue. The idea of mutual education is stressed in both the Berry and the Pioneer College literature. In their literature it is written that Pioneer College,

> seeks qualified applicants from different races, classes, and ethnic groups, students whose several perspectives might contribute significantly to a process of mutual education within and outside the curriculum.

Despite these statements, the institutions fail to demonstrate how and where this mutual education occurs within the classroom. This statement, which is made in the admissions literature, is never reiterated in the discussions of academic programs, campus life and the student experience. At an even greater extreme, Hirst College never even makes claims of mutual education. They only go so far as to state that diversity and difference are important in education. However, this difference is viewed as a tool to objectively learn about cultures other than the dominant culture. The dissimilar others represent the difference, the subject matter, and are not therefore considered beneficiaries of liberal education.

The three institutions seem to understand that the presence of dissimilarity contributes to intellectual growth. All three institutions demonstrate the belief that students learn from others. Others provide opportunities for students to try on new ideas and new points of view. Others are sources of different experiences and different opinions. Berry College purports that the college presents students with avenues for interaction with others that leads to intellectual growth and professional viability. "Each profession needs women and men to whom new ways of thinking and new objects of knowledge pose, not threats, but opportunities for intellectual and professional growth" (Berry College Catalogue). The President of Hirst College echoes this sentiment stating

by quoting from Robert Kegan's (1994) In Over Our Heads: "the single greatest source of growth and development is the experience of difference, discrepancy, anomaly" (p. 210).

While all of these institutions recognize that difference influences growth, what is unclear is if that growth is dependent upon the growth of others. In the documents studied others are a source of learning, a curriculum. The growth and change of others does not appear to play a significant role in the intellectual growth of the student. The priority emphasized by the literature is self-growth and not the growth of others. Additionally, the interdependence and the inextricability of self-growth and growth of others is never expressed or explored. This lack of interdependence renders the possibility for community improbable given Deweyan parameters. If self-growth is dependent on the growth of others, as it is in Deweyan terms, then these institutions lack an essential communal property.

Finally, two exceptions to the institutional understanding of the learning relationships should be noted. First, while they don't necessarily acknowledge learning relationships within the curriculum, Pioneer College makes some explicit statements that clearly value the depth and essential nature of learning relationships of dissimilar students. They state,

> Over the course of four years, our students live and study together in an intimate community with people both like and unlike themselves. The experience is a powerful stimulus to personal and intellectual growth. At Pioneer, students meet people of different races, ethnicities, religions, economic backgrounds, political persuasions, sexual orientations, tastes and sensibilities. They share

> their lives with students from every part of the United States and from thirty different countries. They encounter some ideas and values that they admire others that they reject, and still others with which they will wrestle throughout their lives.

By recognizing the encounters and interactions with difference as stimulus for personal and intellectual growth, this institution demonstrates the value it places on learning relationships in liberal education. In contrast, no examples of learning relationships where found in the Rugger College documents. The idea of dissimilarity as a stimulus for growth does not seem to be accepted. At this institution, students are expected to grow and develop through faculty expectation and interaction, self-discipline and self-determination. Outside this binary relationship, others appear irrelevant.

Conclusions

Did these four liberal arts colleges meet the criteria for Deweyan multiculturalism, and in doing so are they providing students, faculty and staff with the means to community? Based on the content analysis of public documents, it appears that these particular institutions remain fundamentally tied to liberal ideas about community and difference. These colleges, with perhaps the exception of Pioneer College, understand multiculturalism as primarily enumerative, developmental for students, and peripheral to the liberal curriculum and the institutional mission.

Our content analysis suggests that effective communication of difference, whether through the subject matter, pedagogy, or student-faculty dialogue appears to be inadequate at Berry, Hirst, and Rugger. Unlike Pioneer, these three colleges did not articulate multiculturalism as elemental to their educational missions. Rather, each spoke

of multiculturalism as an object of inquiry and not the means for inquiry. For Berry, Hirst, and Rugger liberal inquiry is the means to understand multiculturalism; for Pioneer College the epistemological difference inherent in multiculturalism is the means to knowledge of self and others.

From the content analysis, Pioneer College's revision of its traditional liberal mission appears the consequence of many factors that are far too many to explore here. However, what is quite clear from this analysis is that Pioneer's liberal mission de-emphasizes the Neo-Idealist Individual. Where the missions of the other colleges champion the Individual as subject in an inquiry about self and object other, Pioneer seems to pull away from that paradigm and orient itself toward a Deweyan understanding the individual in community. Pioneer's publications describe a learning community that values intellectual risk the consequence of communication with dissimilar others and epistemic pluralism. Pioneer, unlike the other colleges studied, appears to understand that it is through difference that self-realization can be attained—which if true is a correction of the liberal equation. To what degree or extent this equation is effectively applied is the subject of a subsequent qualitative study by the researchers.

We do not mean to suggest that from this content analysis we believe these four institutions to fully meet or fail to meet the criteria for Deweyan multiculturalism. Our assessment suggests that these four liberal arts colleges publicly adhere to traditional definitions of liberal learning in varying degrees. For example, each institution amends or re-engineers curriculum through such things as independent study or majors and senior theses, undoubtedly expanding the options for students. However, it remains uncertain whether these additive changes--much like the enumerative change in student racial and

ethnic diversity--critically alter the institution's communal potential. Additive measures, whether curricular or extra-curricular, rarely seem to produce elemental transformation. The most promising exception to this may be the growing presence and curricular strength of interdisciplinary programs and courses that include critical perspectives and employ student-centered pedagogies. These interdisciplinary programs and courses and pedagogies will be addressed in a subsequent study by the researchers.

It is our view that if we were to understand and enact multiculturalism on our campuses in a Deweyan way, we would introduce a method of thinking or "intelligent learning"(Dewey, 1944, p. 153) which would make the ideal of community possible for institutions of higher learning. As a method of thinking and thus learning, Deweyan multiculturalism can serve as a means to a universality that is not characterized by hegemonic assimilation or stunted growth. Instead, such thinking would be the means to an end (community) that would continue to inform its means (multiculturalism). In this scheme, a community based on commonality and difference would emerge and evolve. Characteristically Deweyan, universality and difference would alter and transform each other, serving to promote the growth of the community. These four liberal arts colleges will continue to be the object of our comprehensive inquiry into the ideal of collegiate community and the challenges of multiculturalism, an investigation we hope will serve to inform institutional policies and practices at these colleges and other post-secondary institutions striving for effective pluralistic community.

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[1] For the purposes of this paper, we will consider the ideal of community specifically in liberal arts colleges but add the caveat that because our modern day "multiversities" are a series of communities grounding undergraduate education in the tradition of liberal learning, they, too, could be served by this analysis.
[2] The remainder of the project will include semi-structured interviews of college presidents, faculty, administrators and students. These interviews will be informed by the content analysis employed.

[40] In a convocation address, the President of Hirst College called for an increase in the recruitment of "diverse faculty" in order to be competitive with other colleges. At Berry College, a similar statement was found.

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